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To review the project documents scan the QR code or go to Quick Links at www.fs.usda.gov/deschutes.



Central Cascades Wilderness Management Strategies Project



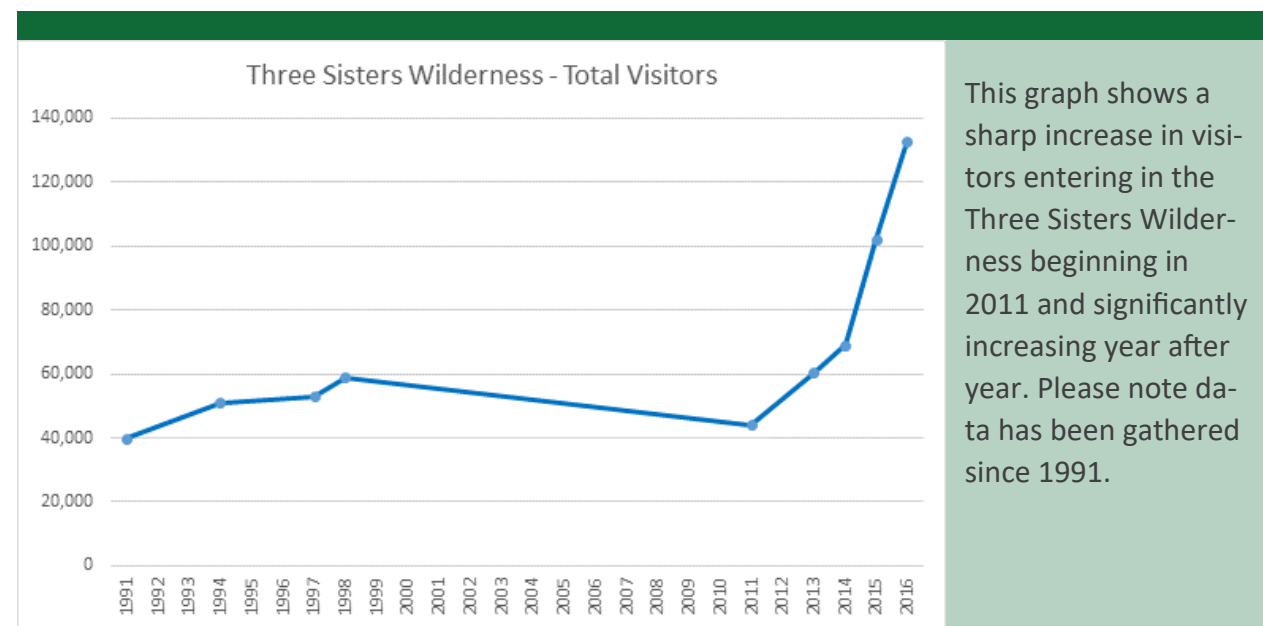
for the greatest good

Need to Manage Visitor Use within the Central Cascade Wilderness Areas

Between 2011 and 2016 the Forest Service noted substantial increases in visitation to the five Central Cascades Wilderness Areas (Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, Three Sisters, Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak) coinciding with notable increases in vegetation trampling, loss of meadow and riparian vegetation, tree damage, human and dog waste, widening and braiding of trails, overcrowding and unsafe parking conditions, and compaction of sites in these areas.

Despite 19 Forest Service and volunteer wilderness rangers taking enforcement measures and doing daily outreach, education and patrolling of these wilderness areas the impacts continued to increase as annual visitation grew 15-20% year after year.

In the winter of 2016 Forest Supervisors on the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests reached the conclusion that a change in management strategies for the wilderness areas was needed. In January 2017 they created a team of resource specialists to gather data and develop a range of management strategies to meet the mandates of the Wilderness Act, as established by Congress.





Increasing wildlife disturbance



Campfire rings



Garbage within wilderness increasing



Trail widening



Increase in vegetation trampling.



Increase in invasive plant spread in the wilderness.

Developing the Management Strategies

One principle guiding the team of specialists was to develop alternative strategies for managing visitor use that would both provide broad access to wilderness areas for visitors while making sure the wilderness was managed

“in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character ...(Wilderness Act, Section 2).”

Following public comment on an initial proposal for management in May and June 2017, the team began developing alternative strategies in response to public comment and additional data.

During 2017 and early 2018, the team developed and analyzed the environmental impacts of a range of visitor use management strategies. In April 2018, a range of five alternative strategies went out for public comment (see adjacent table). Meetings were held with various interest groups as well as four public meetings and a Wilderness Pub. Over 500 individual or group comment letters or inputs were received along with close to 5,000 comment form letters.

Range of Alternatives

Alternative 1 – No Action
Follow current management practices.
Day-use and overnight use require free self-issue permits for most trailheads.
Obsidian and Pamelaia Limited Entry Areas remain.
Campfire ban in specific locations.
Designated camping sites and setbacks from water at some locations.

Alternative 2 – Initial Proposal
Day-use permits required
Three Sisters – 27 trailheads (56%)
Mt. Jefferson – 18 trailheads (87%)
Mt. Washington – 3 trailheads (30%)
Free self-issue permits continue at all other trailheads in those wilderness areas as well as all of Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak wilderness areas.
Overnight permits required for all wilderness areas.
No camping zones.

Alternative 3 – Focus on high-use areas
Day use permits required
Three Sisters – 10 trailheads (21%)
Mt. Jefferson – 7 trailheads (32%)
Mt. Washington – 2 trailheads (20%)
Free self-issue permits continue at all other trailheads in those wilderness areas as well as all of Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak wilderness areas.
Overnight permits required for Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington and Three Sisters wilderness areas.
Camping Zones
Three Sisters – 3 zones
Mt. Jefferson – 2 zones

Alternative 4 – Accounts for Growth and Displacement
Day use permits required
Three Sisters – 15 trailheads (31%)
Mt. Jefferson – 11 trailheads (50%)
Mt. Washington – 2 trailheads (20%)
Free self-issue permits continue at all other trailheads in those wilderness areas as well as all of Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak wilderness areas.
Overnight permits required for all five wilderness areas.
Camping Zones
Three Sisters – 3 zones
Mt. Jefferson – 2 zones

Alternative 5 – Wilderness Wide Permit System
Day-use permits required at all trailheads in all five wilderness areas.
Overnight permits required for all five wilderness areas.
Camping zones:
Camping zones delineated for all wilderness areas.

Common to all alternatives
Campfire Ban
Ban campfires above 5,700’ in elevation in Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington and Three Sisters wilderness areas.
Ban campfires above 6,000’ in elevation in the Diamond Peak Wilderness.
No ban in Waldo Lake Wilderness.
Eliminate designated campsites and setbacks from water and trails.